CLAIMS

1. A self latching device including a latch member moveable between a latching position and a non latching position, the latch member when in the latching position being engaged with a strike, biasing means to bias the latch member into one of said latching and non-latching positions and magnetic means for moving the latch member into the other of said latching and non-latching positions.

2. The device of claim 1 wherein the magnetic means is a magnet associated with the strike and a magnet associated with the latch member.

3. The device of claim 2 wherein the magnets are permanent magnets.

4. The device as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein one magnet is fixed in position and the other is moveable.

5. The device as claimed in claim 4 wherein the magnet associated with the latch member is moveable.

6. The device as claimed in claim 5 wherein the moveable magnet is moveable in a direction transverse to the direction in which the latch member moves between the latching and non-latching positions.

7. The device as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 6 wherein the latch device includes moving means for moving the moveable magnet.

8. The device as claimed in claim 7 wherein there is provided retention means for temporarily retaining the moveable magnet following movement thereof by the moving means.

9. The device as claimed in claim 7 or 8 further including a user accessible slider mechanism is coupled to the moving means.

10. The device as claimed in claim 9 wherein the slider mechanism includes an engagement element to engage with the latch member and move the latch member against the biasing effect of the biasing means.

11. The device as claimed in claim 10 wherein the biasing means is a spring, which biases the latch member to the non-latching position.

12. The device as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 11 wherein the slider mechanism includes a user accessible actuating element, which is moveable to unlatch the latch, the actuating element being moveable in the direction in which a closure element, such as a window, is moveable toward an open position.

13. The device as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 12 wherein the device is of a construction that is attachable to the vertical side of a sliding sash of a window whereby when the sash is moved to its closed position the latch device self actuates under the action of the magnetic means, thereby locking the sash into the closed position.

14. The self latching device as claimed in claim 13 in combination with a hung window sash wherein a said self latching device is attached to or mounted with each vertical side of the hung sash.

15. A window sash mounted for vertical sliding movement in a frame the sash including vertical side elements in each of which is located a self latching latch device which has

a latch member movable between a latching position and a non-latching position the latch member when in the latching position being engaged in a strike located with a portion of the frame which is adjacent the vertical side element of the sash, and moving means for moving the latch member into engagement with the strike when the sash has moved to a position where latching of the sash is to occur.

16. The window sash as claimed in claim 15 wherein the latching device includes an operating element which is, in use, moveable by a person moving the sash from a latched position to effect movement of the latch member to its non-latching position, the operating element being movable in a direction which corresponds to the direction in which the sash is to move away from the latched position.

17. The window sash as claimed in claim 16 wherein the latch member is moved into the latching position by attraction between two magnetic elements, one mounted with the strike and the other with the latch member.

18. The window sash as claimed in claim 17 wherein the latching device further includes means for causing a shearing action between the magnetic elements to occur whereby the latch member can be moved to the non-latching position.

19. The window sash as claimed in claim 18 wherein one magnetic element is movable to a position where it is repulsed by the other magnetic element and thereby driven into a retaining means.

20. A self latching device substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.